



Isabella Star

By David Sena & Pete Turner

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Effect:

The performer (after talking to the audience about astrological numbers and how to work them out) asks for somebody to participate in an experiment to work out the astrological number of someone they know.

A paper ball is thrown to select 3 random members of the audience; one of the three is selected and this participant is invited onto the stage and is asked to sit with their eyes closed. The moment the participant closes their eyes the performer starts to receive thoughts, scribbles something on a business card and seals it inside an envelope. He hands the envelope to a member of the audience so that it can't be tampered with at any point.

The participant is asked to keep her eyes closed and is now asked to think of the birth-date she chose (both the day and the month). She's instructed, when the image is clear in her mind to open her eyes.

The performer starts by correctly identifying whether the date is odd or even (much to the surprise of the participant), he is also able to correctly tell the participant the star sign of the person they are thinking of and finishes by telling them the exact date they are thinking of (without asking any questions).

After the applause has died down, the performer asks the participant to reveal the astrological number they are thinking of for the first time. The participant's attention is turned to the envelope (that has been with the audience member the entire time). The envelope is opened (by the audience member) and the number inside is found to match the astrological number that the participant was thinking of!

- **No Preshow**
- **No impressions**
- **The participant never writes anything down**

Breakdown:

There are several things that are employed to make this work, upon first glance this may seem like quite a bit of work but I assure you it's not!

Once you have the basics down you will realize you have one of the strongest/cleanest effects possible in your hands. There are some mathematical oddities that we found when working on this routine that made this entire thing possible (we will not get into the LONG scientific process, we will just give you the necessary information to make this routine work).

This routine is broken down into four stages for ease of learning:

- 1) **Getting the audience to work out an astrological number.**
- 2) **Obtaining the number.**
- 3) **Making the subject believe you had predicted the number in advance.**
- 4) **Using the number she gave to work out the date of birth she's thinking of.**

Determining the Astrological Number:

The first step is to get the audience to work out their astrological number. The way they do this is ask them to take someone's date of birth (forgetting about the year) e.g. 3rd of March, take the day (in this example **3**) double it (**6**) and then finally add the month number on top (In our case it's the **3rd** month so the total would be **9**).

This is very simple mathematics and over VERY fast, if you look at the total there is a multitude of days and months that will make up this astrological number so in no way does it represent the person's birthday.

Some Examples:

Date	Day x 2	+ Month No.	Total
1st May	1 x 2 = 2	May = 5	7
4th October	4 x 2 = 8	October = 10	18
23rd February	23 x 2 = 46	February = 2	48
9th July	9 x 2 = 18	July = 7	25
30th September	30 x 2 = 60	September = 9	69
16th January	16 x 2 = 32	January = 1	33

Discovering the Astrological Number #1:

The next step is to obtain the total so that we can work our way backwards and reverse the process without the audience ever realizing we're doing it.

If we are performing at a larger stage venue then we will utilise the Dunninger ploy to gain this information. We can also apply a beautiful time delay subtlety to this which will give us the motivation for asking for this number whilst guiding the spectator onto the stage. This is achieved as follows:

Addressing the audience - ***"In a few moments I am going to ask you for the number, when I do please answer honestly and we will go from there".***

Now for the selection process you can either do it as described in the effect description and throw out a paper ball or you can ask three people to stand and ask them a couple of meaningless questions to select one of the three.

The questions you are asking are apparently there (as far as the audience are concerned) to sum up which participant to use. The questions you ask are placed there for nothing more than theatrical purpose.

Here is an example question - ***"If I asked you to walk to the end of a corridor with two doors on the end, would you go in the door on the right or on the left?"***

As you lead the selected participant to the stage, ask for a round of applause and under the guise of the applause, say ***"I forgot to ask, the astrological number that you were thinking of?"***

Since you had mentioned earlier that you would be asking for this number we have eliminated any psychological obstructions and the spectator will reply without question! The audience will not know they have given you this information.

Note: If for some reason you can't use Dunninger's ploy, you're free to use some sort of billet/imp device but I honestly think the routine loses a lot of its power if you do so.

With the spectator on stage - ***"Now think about the astrological number you have, there are a lot of different combinations of days and months that would make up that number. I would like you to think of the date that the person you're thinking of was born, close your eyes for me and do not open them until I instruct otherwise".***

Convincer: This may sound like a slight back track but you will understand why we have made it this way in a moment. Onstage from the start of the set, place an open envelope with a card inside.

On that piece of card write – ***"Today I will meet a lovely lady who will think of someone dear to her whose astrological number will be ____".*** Leaving a space where the number should be.

Before you have selected a volunteer, pick up the envelope up (holding it closed) and say to the audience - ***"This will come into play in a few moments time".***

After the subject is selected, Dunninger's ploy is used and we now know the number. The subject is sat onstage with her eyes closed.

Try to imagine this from her perspective:

Stand behind the participant (so even if the participant opens her eyes she won't be able to see what you're doing) and silently pick up the envelope (the subject doesn't know you have picked it

up). Slide the card out, look at the subject and then at the audience (make this theatrical). Scratch your head (try to make it look like you are picking up on thoughts) and then silently jot the subject's astrological number down on the space (don't let the audience see what number you wrote).

To the audience it will simply look like you are receiving thoughts and making a prediction. Seal the envelope and say to the audience - ***"This envelope is going to be very important"***. As you are saying that drop the pen down on the table you got the envelope from.

Note: This is for the purpose of the seated subject, they will hear you say ***"This envelope is going to be very important"*** and then hear you making noise at the table which will make you believe in her mind you are just picking it up.

Look at someone at the front row of the audience and address them - ***"It is absolutely imperative that you don't let me near this envelope, please make sure it is sealed and don't let anyone tamper with it"***.

The audience is never aware anything has gone on thus far (as they don't know you know the astrological number) and just believes you are giving them instructions.

The subject on the other hand just hears you pick up the envelope, state it is sealed and that you are not going to go anywhere near it. Because she has seen it before the effect started and there's someone to verify it was sealed when it got to them, she will believe it was sealed before the show.

Note: Another option for the less bold would be to nail write this information. You could also check in Tony Corinda's ***"13 Steps to Mentalism"*** for details on using carbon envelopes. If you choose to use either of these methods, you can openly ask the participant to keep her eyes open and hand HER the envelope.

Addressing the seated subject - ***"Keeping your eyes closed for me (insert their name), imagine that it is this person's birthday, imagine for a second being this person and then waking up on that day seeing a large calendar on the wall. When you have looked at this calendar and you see the date vividly in your mind, open your eyes, but take a few seconds to do so"***.

Discovering the Astrological Number #2:

Those of you who prefer to work close up may prefer the following option for secretly gaining this information. In this variation we will be utilising a marked deck of cards. Although any marked deck would suffice I personally recommend either the ***"Ted Lesley"*** or ***"Boris Wild"*** versions. You may be sitting there now, thinking why doesn't he just use the marked cards to get the date and the month? The answer is simple; I want to reveal the card at the end! Not only that, if you give each suit a meaning you get a free reading about the person that cannot fail.

Here's an example -

"Each suit represents a different characteristic for example clubs would be bubbly outgoing, spades mysterious, diamonds sharp witted and intelligent and hearts very loving". All you need to do is explain to the participant that an ace represents one; a joker, represents a zero and tell them to forget the picture cards. So if the number is twelve, you would ask them to take out an ace and a two and the suits that best represent the relative. If they take the hearts out you know that they see that person as a caring person, someone who is at times overly kind and a very loving person. Essentially the suit that the spectator selects will reflect how they perceive this person to be based on the personality stereotypes which you have attributed to each suit.

For this to be successful it is essential that the spectator understands what they have to do. In the **"Portugal Video"** I instruct the young woman three times just to be sure. You may check out the Portugal video using the following link:

<http://youtu.be/j2zOgt4NEsc>

Turn your back to the participant and then ask them to take the card or cards out and keep them to themselves. Then place them/it face down on their palm. Ask them to tell you when they are done. When they say they are, turn back around and casually glance over to see if there are one or two cards. If there is one card, don't try to look for the marking. Take the participant's wrist and bring it up to your eye line while simultaneously saying - ***"Can you hold your hands like this, sandwiching the card?"***

When the card comes up in your sight, look for the marking. If there are two cards (or if you don't have a marked deck) this is the peek I use: Ask them to hold the deck up and visualize it in their mind, really taking in all the detail. Take the pack from them, extend your arm and ask them to place it on top. I apply this peek as the deck is coming towards my body: Place the first finger of the other hand on the back of the deck and the thumb on the short edge of the cards (the side nearest to you). Raise one card just enough to see the index at the corner closest to you. The photo shows an exaggerated lifting.



This is done really, really quickly; a little flick of the corner and that's it. I move straight into cutting and shuffling the deck from this point and then ask them to place the second card on top (again extending the arm and repeating the peeking process).

Note: It is essential that you take a peek as the cards are coming towards you and just as you are about to shuffle.

Now either way we know the astrological number and the suits of the cards (should we want to give a failsafe character reading).

Working out the Birthday:

This is where the astrological number makes everything work for you. Without you even knowing it the astrological number instantly eliminates 6 months!

Take a look at the list below, you will notice the months are numbered. As an aid when you first start rehearsing/performing this routine I advise you to have a small crib if you think you might have problems with the months number.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

If the astrological number is **odd** (like in our example **nine**) the month they are thinking of can only be an odd numbered month (e.g. **January, March, May**).

If the astrological number they're thinking is **even** (for example **fourteen**, it will be an even month like **February** or **April**).

We are now 6 months closer to getting to the month without doing anything!

I like to start by mentioning the date; I look at the subject and ask them to concentrate on the date and in their mind just think of whether it is odd or an even date.

Pick up a small note pad and boldly write **Odd** on it (make it look like you are just making notes).

Address the subject - *"It's an even date correct?"*

If they say yes, don't make a fuss about the paper. Just keep using it to make notes (you can always have a tiny drawing of the crib in there, nobody will notice). If they say no say simply turn the paper round saying - *"Ah well it's a good job I committed to this"*.

Note: We need to know if their date is odd or even. It's essential to make this work.

To the subject and audience this is seen as nothing more than a theatrical process and will be impressed that you guessed whether it was odd or even.

This is where we employ a clever anagram system, there is no questioning and it will never look like fishing.

Let's take a look at the odd months (because our example was an odd month).

Odd Months	Even Months
J Anuary	A pril
M Arch	J une
M Ay	A ugust
J uly	F ebruary
S eptember	O cto B er
N ovember	D ecem B er

You will see the common occurring letter for **3** of the **6** months; they all share the same second letter **"A"** which allows us to reduce the months from six to three. Ask the spectator to visualize the letters of the month they are thinking of in their mind. Ask them to imagine the first letter and

repeat it in their mind, then see the second letter more brightly and to imagine screaming it over again like **"A, A, A"**. At this moment one of two things will happen:

- **The spectator smiles/ freaks out, meaning you've hit the second letter and we now know it is Jan, Mar or May.**
- **Or they don't and just nod as though they are repeating the letter. This means you're working with the remaining 3 months July, Sept or Nov.**

If we were working with the even months, you will notice there is a letter 'B' three letters in from the end of **DecemBer, OctoBer**. In one month, **FeBruary** it is three in from the beginning.

You have a couple of options open to you.

Because we need to get rid of three months, and **February** doesn't have a **"B"** three letters from the end it makes it difficult to eliminate (or keep depending on the branch we go down.)

The first option available is when we ask them to create the astrological number to not use February as follows - ***"In a moment you will think of the date a friend of yours was born, for example the 2nd of February. I would like you first of all to think of the day which in this case is the second, and double it. In my example the result would be four. You must now add the month number on top. Since February is the second month, the total would be six and this would be our astrological number. For the sake of making this a little more impressive, please don't pick someone who was born in February"***.

This means when we come to use the anagram later (remember it's an even month) we can do this - ***"Imagine the month written in the air and I'd like you to think about the last letter, repeat it over and over in your mind. Then the second from last, each time the letters become brighter and brighter and now the third letter in from the end scream this in your mind like B, B, B."***

If they freak out we are right down to two months (because only **October** and **December** are the only even months with a **"B"** three letters from the end!)

If they do not freak out, we are down to three months because we have already eliminated **February** right at the start and we have just eliminated **October** and **December**.

If you want to perform this routine to guess the participants Birth date, you obviously don't have the excuse to steer them away from **February**. So you have the option (after they are repeating the **"B"** in their mind) of using a closed question.

"There's not a B third letter from the beginning is there?"

Both David Sena and I do not use this since probability is biased in our favour that they won't be thinking of February (it is **1** in **12**). We just ask them to repeat the third letter in from the end in their mind.

Either way if you have followed here's everything we now know:

- **The astrological number**
- **Whether the date is odd or even**
- **Have reduced it down to three months.**

Bear in mind to the audience it could still be any day or any month!

Here comes the magical moment!

In our example, our astrological number was **9**.

We have determined it's an odd month (based on the astrological number) they have freaked out on the second letter being an **"A"** and we know the date is **odd** (because we used the two out described earlier).

So we know it's an odd date in **Jan, March** or **May**.

This is where the routine becomes genius (in our opinion).

We take our Astrological number (**9**).

And quickly do a bit of simple math.

- **9 minus Jan (1) = 8** **half of 8 = 4** **(this is an EVEN number so it can't be our date!)**
- **9 minus Mar (3) = 6** **half of 6 = 3** **(this is an ODD number, it MUST be our date!)**
- **9 minus May (5) = 4** **half of 4 = 2** **(this is an EVEN number so it can't be our date!)**

This works every single time!

Note: once every blue moon (very, very rarely), you might reach two possible dates. In this case all you have to do is fish for which of the two it is. As mentioned the chances of this happening are very rare.

The Reveals:

I like to keep this routine very propless. I hand the subject a pad and ask them to write the day the person they're thinking of was born (while my back is turned).

I keep facing the audience (the subject behind me); I look at my crib of star signs (mentioned later) for that date and I start by revealing the star sign. I then proceed to ask them to scream the date at me in their mind and then I say aloud the date.

The subject will freak out, ask them to turn around the pad and your audience will then give you a huge round of applause.

Ask the subject to take a seat and just as they are about to take a seat, address the subject - ***"I almost forgot, I handed out an envelope before we started, can you tell the audience for the first time what the astrological number you're thinking of is?"***

The spectator replies - **"Nine"**.

Performer - ***"Can you please open the envelope and read out the prediction I made"***.

The audience member reads - ***"Today I will meet a lovely lady who will think of someone dear to her whose astrological number will be nine"***.

Take another round of applause and ask the subject to seat.

The great thing about this is that the subject who gave you the astrological number will believe the number was in there before she came on the stage! This will eliminate the need for her to say you asked for the number. Why would she you knew it anyway!

The process might seem long in reading but it is over very quickly in actual performance.

If you are working this close up and have used the card markings to get the astrological number then you may prefer to emulate the reveal in the “Portugal” clip. In essence this allows you to give an accurate personality reading based upon the chosen suit followed by the revelation of the date of birth.

Crib :

You can have a crib like this one already drawn on a pad (the one you used for the Odd/Even bit) or you can draw one as if you were doodling some information:

Odd	JAn	MAr	MAy	Jul	Sep	Nov
Even	FeB	Apr	Jun	Aug	OcB	DeB
Possibilities						

This way when you’re rehearsing (or even performing if you’re afraid to mess up the calculations) you can cross all the months that are being used and after that you can write below the day’s you’re working with like this (Let’s say for example the astrological number in question is **11**):

Odd	JAn	MAr	MAy	Jul	Sep	Nov
Even	FeB	Apr	Jun	Aug	OcB	DeB
Possibilities	5 th	4 th	3 rd	2 nd	1 st	N/A

Zodiac Sign:

One extra revelation that you might want to do is reveal the zodiac sign. I usually use a small crib in my notepad so when I’ve worked out the date I can have an extra revelation for free!

Name	Date
Capricorn	22 December – 20 January
Aquarius	21 January – 19 February
Pisces	20 February – 20 March
Aries	21 March – 20 April
Taurus	21 April – 21 May
Gemini	22 May – 21 June
Cancer	22 June- 22 July
Leo	23 July – 22 August
Libra	23 August – 23 September
Scorpio	24 September – 23 October
Sagittarius	24 October – 22 November
Capricorn	23 November – 21 December

Back story for performance:

The performer looks up and down his audience, waiting a few seconds for absolutely everything to go silent. The moment the room drops to an eerie silence the performer addresses the audience - ***“How many people in this room by show of hands have ever visited a fortune teller of any kind?”*** A few hands go up in the audience.

The performer then continues - ***“What I am about to tell you is very much a true story, I cannot remember all the exact details i.e. dates/times but for the record it is information I have managed to piece together from reliable sources and from my own memory. Before I was born my great grandmother left my great grandfather. For purpose of saving time I will refer to him as granddad.***

I obviously never knew about the breakup until later years but this little fact’s relevance will become clear in a few moments’ time. The year I was born my granddad left to start up an antiques business in Romania and it was about that time he made what was for him the greatest discovery of his life.

Being an antiques dealer he met people from all walks of life and frequently traded with the local gypsies. While visiting the local gypsy site my granddad met the eyes of a beautiful gypsy lady twenty years his junior named Isabella and he instantly fell head over heels. He started to talk to her and she fled, a little embarrassed about what had happened he finished his business and left.

Several months passed and he was passing through the site and he saw her again! This time he didn’t try to approach her, he smiled from a safe distance...and she reciprocated!

After the smile which to us seems such a small insignificant thing but to him was the seed of a life changing experience. My granddad started visiting the site more and more. He used any excuse just to see her and after a while he gained her trust.

One thing led to another and the couple fell madly in love, much to the distaste of Isabella’s family. You see, it is a gypsy law that a gypsy must marry another gypsy and often their marriages are arranged.

One night while my granddad slept several gypsy men from the site went to his antique store and set it on fire...while he was inside. Isabella being a brave woman and spurred on by her heart rushed through the flames and managed to get granddad out to safety. It was in that moment they decided to flee to my granddad’s house in the U.K.

I grew up only ever knowing Isabella as Grandma and it wasn’t till the age of about seven when she told me bedtime stories that I knew any different. She told me many stories that I paid no real attention to at the time as I saw them as fabrications. These were beautiful tales of seeing dreams and colourful stories of family members that each had a different mystical power.

As a young child Isabella followed the stars, I remember her passionately telling me that everything was related to astrology and that her particular gift was being able to instantly know what star somebody was born under by the way that person behaved.

Years passed and my interest for the stories dwindled to the point where I completely forgot about them. And it wasn’t until five years ago that I really paid them any interest.

Isabella became seriously ill, refusing any medical attention as she believed that the curse her family set upon her had finally caught her up. She silently passed away and several days later my granddad gave me an envelope.

It was explained that Isabella had left us all something close to her heart and when I opened the envelope just like everything else Isabella had told me it was a mystery. I am not going to go into much detail of what the envelope contained; only that it told me to remember her stories.

It was emotional reading those words, it made me a little angry that I couldn't understand the message she was trying to get across. For the first night in a long time I dreamt.

The dream really didn't have much relevance other than reminding me of one of the stories Isabella told me. For the life in me I could not remember any of the rest and after a year of pulling the story apart and putting it back together it hit me.

In eastern culture the Japanese samurai taught their children martial arts by having the children play games and unbeknown to the children they were learning ancient skills. Over here in western culture we teach our children math's and English in songs, she had taught me her secrets through stories!

I felt like such a fool, I had not paid attention and most of the secrets were now lying with her. It really put things into perspective, maybe from the moment she met me she knew the exact course my life was going to take, maybe she put me on that path, and maybe the curse was real. She said we all start our existence as stars and the moment our life fades we become the brightest star in the sky.

The one thing I do know it left me so many un-answered questions. Life is most definitely the biggest mystery of all is life and in retrospect all the little things we give no relevance to suddenly become important. All of this started with one insignificant smile and it now comes full circle with me sharing with you some of my findings".

Credits/Inspirations:

- Dunninger for Dunninger's ploy.
- Annemann for his bold approach.
- T.A. Waters for his inspirational work on astrology routines.